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SUBJECT: AFRICOM HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS CONFERENCE,
ARUSHA, TANZANIA, 2-5 FEB 2010

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Background

¶1. The United States Africa Command Humanitarian Assistance Branch conducted a Humanitarian Assistance (HA) conference in Arusha, Tanzania, from 02-05 February 2010. The conference brought together Department of Defense security assistance officers, their locally employed staff, DoD civilians providing HA, U.S. Africa Command HA managers, and various subject experts, along with State Department and USAID officers engaged in HA (including USAID Mission Director/Senegal, who addressed the gathering on the first day). The conference provided an overview of the direction of humanitarian assistance under U.S. Africa Command and processes for execution of that assistance. The conference's goal was twofold: to improve the knowledge of DoD action officers regarding HA processes and to synergize DoD HA efforts with DoS and USAID HA programs on the continent by incorporating a 'whole of government' approach.

¶2. Dr. Diana Putman, the U.S. Africa Command Humanitarian Assistance Branch Chief (and a USAID career employee), launched the conference with a quick overview of the goals for the week, which included laying out the roles of various agencies from across the U.S. government, developing partnerships, synergizing new and existing programs, and capturing lessons learned. In her introduction of the keynote speaker, Ambassador J. Anthony Holmes, the U.S. Africa Command Deputy for Civil Military Affairs, she commented on how the interagency process for HA is still relatively new and requires effort to implement. Communication is a key facet of interagency process because while the 'whole of government' is not easy to begin with, the various agencies (DoD, DoS, and USAID) look at the world differently. Dr. Putman concluded by expressing hope the conference would 'build bonds' and understanding between the agencies and participants in order to advance the President's foreign policy goals.

Keynote Speaker: Ambassador J. Anthony Holmes

¶3. AFRICOMQs Deputy for Civilian-Military Activities, Ambassador Holmes, opened the conference by laying out in detail the Obama Administration's vision of AFRICOMQs 'whole of government' approach to its engagement in Africa, of which humanitarian activities are an important part. He described how the underfunding of diplomacy and development since the end of the Cold War, and the uneven allocations of foreign assistance across both geographic and functional areas, had created imbalances that need to be carefully managed. The key to managing AFRICOMQs mil-mil and civ-mil

engagement, he stressed, was the active involvement of the entire U.S. country team to ensure that our military assistance dovetails properly with the other components of our bilateral and regional programs. AFRICOM understands the long-term nature of the challenges Africa faces, Amb. Holmes emphasized, and it wants to work closely with country teams to achieve the best match between its strengths and expertise and the priorities of each U.S. ambassador on the continent.

¶4. To accomplish its mission of sustained engagement to enhance the United States' broad security interests in Africa, through a robust contribution to professionalizing African militaries and ensuring their proper role in democratic societies, AFRICOM needs the buy-in from country teams and constructive input from all civilian agencies at posts. In the humanitarian affairs area, it is trying to develop institutionalized mechanisms for evaluation and follow-up beyond short-term perspective that has prevailed in the past. To gain the maximum impact, it is important that country teams meet regularly to identify gaps in funding and to determine how to best integrate U.S. defense capacity with our diplomacy and development.

Haiti and HA Funding in Africa

¶5. A topic of discussion during the HA Conference was the status of HA funding in light of assistance being provided to Haiti. In the aftermath of Haiti's tragedy, DSCA requested the return of unobligated FY 09/10 funds and all FY10/11 funds. The return of funding placed some projects within Africa on hold. U.S. Africa Command HA branch has compiled a prioritized list of HA projects based on feedback from the country teams and various AFRICOM offices within the Strategy, Plans, and Programs Division. As funding is returned, HA Branch will fund projects based on priority. The key issue is when funding will be returned and at what level. (Comment:

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The return of FY10/11 funds affected a school refurbishment/construction project in Tanzania. However, that project is in U.S. Africa Command's top 10 list and is expected to be restored soon.)

Rest of the Week

¶6. For the rest of the week, the conference covered the mechanisms and processes required to synergize and execute HA activities. Briefers included the USAID Mission Director from Senegal, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the U.S. Africa Command HA coordinators, and legal, medical, and engineering reviews. Specific topics included Humanitarian and Civic Assistance (HCA), HA-Other (HAO), HA-Excess Property (HA-EP), Disaster Planning and Preparedness Program (DP3), Pandemic Response Program (PRP), and Partner Military HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (PMHAP).

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